

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
STATE MILITARY RESERVATION
CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03301-5652**

NHAG-HR

1 October 1997

**MEMORANDUM FOR ALL DIRECTORATES, COMMANDERS, MANAGERS AND
SUPERVISORS**

SUBJECT: Position Vacancy Selections Policy

1. **APPLICABILITY:** This memorandum applies to the selection of all full-time employees (Army and Air).
2. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this memorandum is to encourage the use of interview panels for positions filled within the New Hampshire National Guard employment programs. There are several ways to achieve good strong results; whether you use a panel or not, you should remember that the primary goal is to obtain quality information about the candidates.
3. **POLICIES:** This memorandum establishes the use of panel interviews as an option to selecting supervisors. The interview panel option allows for a single or multiple panel interviews (See attachment 1) The final decision remains that of the selecting supervisor.

When this option is used as suggested in the guide, the following policies will apply:

- a. Selecting supervisor will be responsible for the selection of panel members and act as team leader.
- b. Selecting supervisor will brief all ground rules to panel members and applicants prior to interviews.
- c. Confidentiality of panel discussions is a must. Team leaders should develop a "Statement of Agreement" for each panel member to sign (If desired, refer to attachment 2)
- d. Interview questions (preferably "open-ended") will be the same for each applicant.
- e. Panel members will be above or at least equal to the grade of the position being hired.
- f. Selecting supervisor will consider carefully all inputs before making a decision. All panel discussions will be used as a source of advisory or technical information and provide recommendations on the applicant less suited for the position. Panels considering female and/or ethnic personnel must, in so far as possible include such representation.
- g. Panel members will be non-voting, non-consensus, providing only recommendations.

- h. Selecting supervisor is the only person authorized to make final selection.

NHAG-HR

SUBJECT: Position Vacancy Selections - Policies

4. The preemployment interview is a face-to-face exchange of information providing the opportunity to evaluate the candidate's motivation, level of interest, experience and potentials, and oral communication skills. Of equal importance, the candidate has the opportunity to obtain information he or she needs to make a decision regarding a career in the National Guard.

5. Your approach and behavior forms the basis for the applicant's initial impression of the National Guard. The success of the interview process depends upon your skill in obtaining complete responses, interpreting what has been said, and clearly reporting findings. You should review this letter and the attachment prior to each preemployment interview. With proper utilization, it can help ensure a sound process and fair treatment to all who seek employment. As a supervisor, your evaluation depends largely on what the candidate is willing to tell you. A well-planned, well-organized interview helps you create an environment for open communication. You are better able to disseminate work-related information and upgrade the quality and quantity of information you obtain from the candidate.

6. The whole process is influenced by your mental outlook, intuition, biases, and your ideas of what a "good" employee should be. "Gut reactions" are neither valid nor supportable indicators for making selection decisions; therefore, do not let preconceived notions of "what a good employee should be" interfere with your ability to gain and give information to the candidate.

FOR THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

MICHAEL W. HORNE
LTC, NHANG
Human Resources Officer

Attachments: 1. Guide to Successful Interview
2. Sample Statement of Understanding

GUIDE TO A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

IMPORTANT: This **guide** is prepared to assist interviewers in assessing a candidate's understanding, interest, and desirability for careers in the National Guard. It is simply a **guide** which provides information about the selection and interview process and is **not to be interpreted as policy** as described in para 3 of the policy letter dated 1 Oct 97.

- ? **A. TECHNIQUES:** There are several ways to achieve good strong results; however, the Human Resource Office recommends an interview panel be formed for best results. Whether you use a panel or not, you should remember that the primary interview goal is to obtain quality information about the candidates and to create an atmosphere which will encourage the candidate to speak freely about his or her experiences and future plans.

Should you choose to form an interview panel, we suggest a "2 Team" concept. This is **not** mandatory. Although, as a minimum, one team with reasonable representation is sufficient and is strongly recommended.

If and when it applies the two teams should be developed as follows:

- ? TEAM 1 is comprised of people who would be the peers of that candidate. There should no less than three individuals on this team and they should be from different sections within the branch. This process provides for a good cross-section of people at the worker level who could possibly end up working with this person.
- ? TEAM 2 is always comprised of at least 2 supervisors within these same areas.
- ? TEAM 1 develops interview questions for each specific position advertised and reviewed by the Supervisors prior to the interview. Each interviewer rates the prospective candidates on the scale decided upon by the team. Once all candidates are interviewed and rated by each interviewer, the team collectively evaluates the candidates and forward the compiled list to TEAM 2.
- ? TEAM 2 develops a hiring checklist with a rating scale. Each candidate is rated individually and then all candidates are to be rated.
- ? After both teams have completed this process, the selecting supervisor reviews both team inputs and makes a decision.

Note: The interview schedule should be agreed upon by all participating personnel. You should try to accommodate the candidates' schedule whenever possible. Interviews should be set up, usually not to exceed 30 minutes in duration. TEAM 1 will conduct the first interview, then TEAM 2 will follow-on with their interview. This allows the candidate to plan on an hour interview. You should always review this guide prior to the interview to refine your skills and remind yourself of the several important points.

? **B. PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEW**

Employment interviews are used to supplement material contained in employment candidates' resumes. Since the qualification requirements have already been determined, the interview is to refine the evaluation process for each candidate in order to select the best person for the position being filled. Since this is a major step in determining who will be selected for the vacant position, it is important that it be well developed and well documented.

Using any available criteria, supervisors should develop a list of standard, job-related questions to be asked of all candidates. Good interview questions meet the following minimum criteria:

- Questions are job-related, and appropriate for the grade levels of the position being filled.
- Questions concern the relevant experience and/or training of the candidate.
- Questions do not lead the candidate to an answer.
- Questions do not deal with hypothetical cases.
- Questions do not have obvious responses.
- Questions are not filled with specialized terminology or jargon.

? **C. CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW**

Upon beginning each interview, the selecting official (as the panel leader) should introduce the interviewee to the panel. The candidate being interviewed should be made to feel as comfortable as possible; he or she should be told something about each panel member (if panel is used), how many people are being interviewed, and so forth...

The selecting official should ask if the interviewee has any objections to any panel member's presence or participation, and should tell the candidate to ask for clarification of a question if he or she doesn't understand it. The supervisor should also indicate that panel members may be taking notes during the interview.

Each person interviewed will be asked the same questions as all other candidates, and in the same order. All should be allotted the same time frame for the interview. This will vary somewhat, for some people just naturally talk more than others.

Supervisors should make sure that each candidate understands every question. Follow-on questions may be asked, if they are necessary to obtain a complete and meaningful response to a core question. Listen well as each applicant speaks, and let each fully develop his or her response to all questions. Pay attention for information relevant to the topic being discussed. Listen as well for what is not being said; failure to provide the particular information requested may mean that the candidate does not understand or doesn't know the answer to the question.

It may be necessary to draw out candidates who are not good at interviews, or who don't know how to present their qualifications, although they may be extremely capable of filling the job. Remember, it is in your best interest to discover all possible job-related information, for that will best enable you to identify the best person for the position.

When the questioning is complete, the candidate should be provided with an opportunity to ask questions about the position and the organization, if appropriate. In addition to your gaining information upon which you, the supervisor, will base a decision, you should also use the interview to provide the candidate with the information he or she also need to make a similar decision.

Give the person an idea of what the fixed requirements of the job are. Describe the main activities of the position, and describe the working conditions. It may be wise to advise all candidates of any undesirable conditions in advance, such as fumes, frequent TDYs, night work, etc... Don't scare the person by emphasizing negative aspects of the job. Also avoid making or implying promises or actions that can't or may not be able to be kept, such as regarding advancement opportunities, raises, etc... These can come back to haunt you.

After describing the position, permit the candidate another opportunity to provide information concerning job-related qualifications, or to ask any final questions. Finally, thank the interviewee and give an estimated date when the candidate will be informed of the selection results.

Before making any decisions based upon interview results, compare the interview documentation with the applicant's resume or application. Again, evaluate his or her skills, not just the knowledge and/or experience in your field. Such experience can be much overrated. It may not be necessary and can always be acquired, whereas skills are essential and transferable.

Remember, since the selection interview is part of the selection process, it must be job-related. Additionally, there must be a clear 'audit trail' of why one candidate was selected over another. As supervisors, you must understand both the important role that the interview has in the overall selection process, and the necessity for accurate documentation of every part of that process, including the interview.

The results of every interview should be well documented. An interview work sheet will be invaluable for that purpose. It is critical that each candidate's name and the type of position for which interviewed be recorded on the applicable form. The records of the interview, should be retained by the selecting supervisor for at least two years following the date of the selection.

Although the HRO sends out official written notification for vacancy selections, it is the selecting official's responsibility to personally advise the selectee and non-selectee(s) of interview results.

? D. TIPS ON ASKING QUESTIONS

The purpose of the interview must be clear. Questions should be asked to elicit job-related information which helps determine whether an applicant possesses the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the duties of the position. The following questions do not elicit such information. Some of these questions are obviously inappropriate. Questions that could lead to consideration of non-job related information should be avoided.

Don't Ask:

Sex/Marital Status

Are you married, engaged, single, divorced?
How many children do you have and who will watch them while you're at work?
Are you supplementing your household income?
What does your spouse do?
Will your spouse mind if you travel?

Race/National Origin

How do you feel about working for a supervisor of another race?
What are your feelings about militant members of another race?
Did you ever receive public assistance?
Where were you born?
That's an unusual name, what nationality are you?

Religion

What church do you attend?
Are you active in any church groups?
What religious holidays you observe?

Age

How old are you?
Do you think you'll get along with the young people in this office?
How would you feel working for a supervisor younger than you?
Do you think you have the necessary maturity for this job?

Miscellaneous

How will you get to work?
Do you have a car?
What do you think about the Republicans?

GUIDE TO A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW



1 October 1997

STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT

I hereby agree to participate as a voluntary member of a candidate review panel for the purpose of making employment recommendations to selecting supervisors.

I am familiar with the merit vacancy principles incorporated in the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Adjutant General and the Association of Civilian Technicians, and I agree to abide by those principles.

I am familiar with the principles of equal opportunity in employment set out by policy letter of the Adjutant General, and I agree to be guided in all my activities by those principles.

I agree to act in all matters with fairness and impartiality.

I agree to maintain absolutely confidential, all matters about which I may gain information or access, in connection with my activities as a volunteer, including but not limited to names, numbers or qualifications of candidates for any position vacancy.

I agree to make no attribution with respect to the activities of any panel on which I may participate, or any opinions expressed by members of such a panel, including opinions of my own.

I agree to participate to the best of my ability, and I will at all times act in good faith and in furtherance of the best of the New Hampshire National Guard.

MEMBER , DATE

SELECTING SUPERVISOR

Attachment 2